Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Title of Report:	**Planning Committee Report - LA01/2024/0137/F**
Committee Report Submitted To:	**Planning Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**26th August 2026**
For Decision or **For Information**	**For Decision – Referred Application by Councillor Brenda Chivers and Councillor Steven Callaghan**

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them
Lead Officer	Development Management and Enforcement Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Nil
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:

	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

No: LA01/2023/1276/F **Ward:** Dundooan

App Type: Full

Address: Lands 300m SE of 41 Dogleap Road, Limavady

Proposal: Refurbishment of existing cottage to provide a caretakers cottage as adjacent accommodation support to the proposed Mens Shed community facility, and all associated works.

Con Area: N/A **Valid Date:** 16.02.2024

Listed Building Grade: N/A

Agent: Bell Architects, 65 Main Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6AN

Applicant: Catherine Taylor, 110 Roemill Road, Limavady, BT49 9BE

Objections: 3 **Petitions of Objection: 0**

Support: 8 **Petitions of Support: 0**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Full planning permission is sought for the refurbishment of existing cottage to provide a caretaker's cottage as adjacent accommodation support to the proposed Men's Shed community facility, and all associated works.
- The site is located within the countryside, within designation LYL02, Roe Park LLPA, an existing country park.
- The proposal is contrary to specific policies within the Northern Area Plan 2016, SSPS Edition 2, PPS2 Natural Heritage, PPS3 Access Movement and Parking, PPS15 Planning and Flood Risk, PPS16 Tourism and PPS21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside.
- The main issues include the proposed use in this location, car parking, flooding, impact upon European and Nationally designated sites, impact to landscape character, road safety and impact to an existing tourist asset.
- 3 objections and 8 letters of support have been received in response to the proposal.
- Refusal is recommended.

Drawings and additional information are available to view on the Planning Portal- https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That the Committee has taken into consideration and agrees with the reasons for the recommendation set out in section 9 and the policies and guidance in sections 7 and 8 and resolves to **REFUSE** outline planning permission subject to the reasons set out in section 10.

2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is located on lands 300m SE of 41 Dogleap Road, Limavady. The application site is located on agricultural lands, which are sited immediately adjacent to the Roe Valley Country Park with vehicular access to the site proposed via the existing internal tracks and pedestrian pathways within the Roe Valley Country Park.

2.2 The application site is located within the rural area as defined in the Northern Area Plan 2016, sited approximately 1.3km south of Limavady Town and 0.4km west of the hamlet of Ardgarvan. The application site is located within the designated Roe Valley Country Park Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) and is sited immediately adjacent to the River Roe, which is a designated SAC/ASSI site and the Roe Valley Country Park which is a significant visitor attraction.

2.3 The application site is located within the rural area as defined in the Northern Area Plan 2016, sited approximately 1.3km south of Limavady Town and 0.4km west of the hamlet of Ardgarvan. The site is located within the designated Roe Valley Country Park Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) and is sited immediately adjacent to the River Roe, which is a designated SAC/ASSI site. The Roe Valley Country Park is a significant visitor attraction. There are several built and industrial heritage features within the vicinity of the application site associated with the historic linen and flax industry and hydroelectric generation.

3 RELEVANT HISTORY

3.1 LA01/2023/1276/F - Lands 300m SE of 41 Dogleap Road Limavady - Proposed Retention, Refurbishment, change of use and extension of existing unlisted Mill Buildings to provide a new Men's Shed Community Facility and ground mounted solar panel array for on-site energy generation, and all associated works– Current Application

4 THE APPLICATION

4.1 This is a full application for Refurbishment of existing cottage to provide a caretaker's cottage as adjacent accommodation support to the proposed Men's Shed community facility, and all associated works.

5 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

5.1 External

8 Letters of support have been received. The points raised in support of the project include

• Buildings are integrally linked to the linen industry which one flourish in the Roe Valley and wish to see the buildings preserved and development of the site to be used for the betterment of men's mental health, well-being and reducing isolation.
• Restoration of the buildings will complement the areas cultural and historic past.
• The design and planning process focuses on environmental preservation and sustainability.
• The project will offer a permanent and secure place to meet and a creative space to repair and restore artefacts and grow crops for the benefit of the users of the facility.
• The new location will provide the local community with easier access to the Men's Shed, as well as offering members the therapeutic benefits offered by the Roe Valley Country Park area.
• Men's shed is a valuable community service.
• NHS services are dependent on the charity and voluntary sectors to provide assistance for lower level problems or as a stop gap while awaiting higher level services
• Limavady has suffered from a lack of resources, especially for men. There are many barriers to men accessing services as it is usually in

Derry. For people with social and mental health problems, barriers such as transport, finance, motivation and the ability to plan can prevent them from benefitting from the help they need.
• Community, friendship, routine, education, helping others and doing something to give themselves a sense of worth and esteem is important for long term recovery.

3 Letters of objection have been received. The issues raised within the objection letters include

• Development would have a detrimental impact on an area of outstanding natural beauty/open space used by locals and visitors
• Road is unsuitable for constant traffic and upgrading it would detract from the ambience of the area
• Proposed development would not enhance the area of the Country Park
• Development would negatively impact the environment including bird and other animal habitats
• The location will not suit many who use the facility which may prevent them from using the facility
• Believe that this proposal may lead to further development/expansion in the future
• No valid reason for accommodation at a Men's shed

5.2 **Internal**

DFI Roads – No objections.
Environmental Health – No objections.
NI Water – Odour Assessment required.
Historic Environment Division – Historic Buildings – No objections.
DFI Rivers – Site partially within fluvial floodplain. FRA Required.
DAERA WMU – No objection.
DAERA NED – Content
Shared Environmental Services – No Objections
Loughs Agency – No Objections

6 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that all applications must have regard to the local plan, so far as material to the application, and all other material considerations. Section 6(4) states that in making any determination where regard is to be had to the local development plan, the determination must be made in

accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 The development plan is:

- The Northern Area Plan 2016 (NAP)

6.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is a material consideration.

6.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is a material consideration. As set out in the SPPS, until such times as a new local plan strategy is adopted, councils will apply specified retained operational policies.

6.5 Due weight should be given to the relevant policies in the development plan.

6.6 All material considerations and any policy conflicts are identified in the "Considerations and Assessment" section of the report.

7 RELEVANT POLICIES & GUIDANCE

The Northern Area Plan 2016

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

Planning Policy Statement 2 – Natural Heritage

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3) – Access, Movement and Parking

Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage

Planning Policy Statement 15 – Planning and Flood Risk

Planning Policy Statement 16: Tourism

Planning Policy Statement 21 – Sustainable Development in the Countryside

8 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT

8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to the principle of development within the countryside and designated landscape, the appropriateness of the proposed use and location, impact on protected sites, species, tourism and landscape character, as well as parking provision and flood risk.

Northern Area Plan 2016

8.2 The Northern Area Plan 2016 was adopted on 22nd September 2015. Section 45 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. states that where a planning application is made for planning permission the council, in dealing with the application, must have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.

8.3 The application site is located within the Roe Valley Country Park LLPA (LYL01) as designated in the Northern Area Plan. Policy ENV1 – Local Landscape Policy Areas within the Northern Area Plan states that Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals that would be liable to affect adversely those features, or combination of features, that contribute to the environmental quality, integrity or character of a designated LLPA.

8.4 Zoning LYL 01 sets out the features or combination of features that contribute to the environmental quality, integrity or character of the LLPA.

1. This LLPA is of considerable visual significance and includes the northern part of the Roe Valley Country Park, adjoining countryside, and an area of parkland with significant tree groups between the existing urban edge and the Country Park.

2. It also incorporates the River Roe and Tributaries SAC and ASSI and the Deer Park, and Ballykelly Moraine SLNCI.

8.5 The LLPA's supporting text focuses on the protection of the country park and the open landscape, with a presumption against development other than that essential to the operation of agriculture and for the operation of the country park. The proposal does not relate to either the operation of agriculture or the country park.

8.6 Therefore, with regard to the LLPA designation, this proposal is considered contrary to Designation LYL 01 and associated policy ENV 1 of the NAP.

PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

8.7 Both the SPPS and Policy CTY 4 of PPS21 make provision for the conversion and reuse of existing buildings. The SPPS provides a stricter test of eligibility for buildings in that it requires buildings to be a suitable locally important building of special character or interest. Paragraph 1.12 of the SPPS clarifies that any conflict between the SPPS and retained policy will be resolved in favour of the SPPS. As such the SPPS is the appropriate policy under which to consider the scheme.

8.8 The subject building is identified on the Historic Buildings Database (HB02/03/012/A), although it is not listed.

8.9 The database record identifies the buildings on the site as comprising a former wash mill and nearby workers cottage on edge of an old bleach green (Roe Green). It states that both buildings appear to be indicated on the 1831 map. On the 1848 map the building referred to as the wash mill is labelled 'Old Wash Mill'. By 1857 the valuation recorded 'no works of any kind doing business in these premises for some time past. The database notes that two buildings are of little architectural value. They are of importance because of their connection to the wider complicated history of the mills of the Roe Valley Country Park. The smaller mono-pitched building appears to be a late addition to the larger building as it neither appear on the 1831 or 1848 maps, appearing for the first time on the 1907 map.

8.10 Given historic links to the milling industry in Roe Valley it is considered the subject building falls within the definition of a locally important building and would be eligible for conversion to an appropriate use for the rural location.

8.11 The SPPS requires that the proposed nature and scale of any non-residential use are appropriate to the rural area. The proposed use of the site for a Men's Shed facility is classified as a community use which, as clarified on page 100 of the SPPS, is regarded as a town centre type use and is therefore the proposal is subject to Paragraph

6.273 which outlines that a town centre first approach must be adopted for retail and town centre uses.

8.12 The Be Safe Be Well website outlines the range of activities offered by the organisation including woodworking, laser cut wood crafting, archery, gardening, archery, one to one counselling, cooking, pottery, art, health and nutrition information, music sessions, computer training, horticulture training, various exercise classes and projects, day trips plus, pool, darts and a relaxing reading area. It is noted that the operation hours of the facility are 10am-4pm Tuesday and Thursday. The applicant has not provided any justification for the need for a caretaker's cottage in association with the Men's Shed facility nor has any justification as to why the accommodation is required to be in this rural location and cannot be accommodated within Limavady Town.

8.13 The applicant has not provided any information to demonstrate how they have assessed the town centre first requirement, providing no evidence of attempts to secure suitable premises for the Men's Shed within the town centre or in any other sequentially preferable location within Limavady Town. As such, the proposed facility is considered not appropriate for the countryside location within a protected landscape. Detailed assessment of the proposal to reuse the other buildings, and wider site, for the facility is provided in Committee Report LA01/2023/1267/F, which is also recommended for refusal.

8.14 It therefore follows that as the principle of the facility on the site is not acceptable, a dwelling associated with the facility should be refused permission.

8.15 A criterion of Policy CTY 4 of PPS21 is that *the nature and scale of any proposed non-residential use is appropriate to a countryside location.* For the reasons stated above, the proposed use of the wider site as a Men's Shed facility, and the proposed associated caretakers dwelling, is not appropriate to a countryside location.

8.16 Policy CTY 7 of PPS21 makes provision for dwellings for non-agricultural business enterprises. It is noted that the Men's Shed is not a business enterprise however CTY 7 provides a framework for assessing the need for a dwelling in connection with the proposed facility.

8.17 It states that planning permission for a dwelling in connection with an established non-agricultural business enterprise will be granted where a site specific need can be clearly demonstrated that makes it essential for one of the employees to live at the site of their work.

8.18 The applicant has provided no justification for a dwelling in association with the wider site with no site specific need readily apparent.

8.19 The proposed siting of the facility and caretakers dwelling is approximately 1.3km south of Limavady and access would be heavily dependent upon private car, especially for those who may have a disability and may limit accessibility to those who wish to avail of the facility. The application site is remote and accessed via narrow country roads, without adequate street lighting which would be cause for concern for those who would be required to walk/cycle to the site.

8.20 For the reasons above the application site is not considered an appropriate location for a community facility and no overriding reasons have been provided to justify the proposed location of the facility or to demonstrate the essential need for an associated dwelling.

8.21 The proposal fails to meet with Paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS (Edition 2) and CTY4 of PPS21 in that the proposal would not result in the conversion of an existing building to an appropriate use

8.22 Policy CTY7 of PPS21 provides a framework for assessing a dwelling in association with the facility. It has not been demonstrated that there is a site specific need for the proposed dwelling that makes it essential for an employee to live at the site of their work.

8.23 The proposal fails to meet paragraphs 6.273 of the SPPS in that the proposed use is a town centre use, and it has not been demonstrated that there is no suitable town centre or sequentially preferable location within Limavady Town.

PPS16: Tourism

8.24 Policy TSM 8 of PPS16 – Safeguarding of Tourism Assets states that planning permission will not be granted for development that would in itself or in combination with existing and approved development in the locality have an adverse impact on a tourism asset such as to significantly compromise its tourism value. PPS 16 defines a tourism

asset as any feature associated with the built or natural environment which is of intrinsic interest to tourists.

8.25 The Roe Valley Country Park is regarded as a tourism asset by virtue of its riverside and woodland walks and other recreational value such as fishing, and with over 350,000 visits annually it is a significant tourist attraction. The nature conservation value of the river and its associated woodland is recognised by its designation as a SAC.

8.26 The proposed access to the site would cross through land contained within Roe Valley Country Park. The proposed access route is an area that is heavily used by members of the public on a pedestrianised basis along with park staff (who also require access by vehicle for site management requirements). The access route also proposes to use part of the popular riverside pedestrian path used by members of the public while visiting Roe Valley Country Park. It is the only pathway along the western riverbank.

8.27 The Roe Valley Country Park is owned and managed by DAERA Natural Environment Division (NED) on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure into which members of the public have pedestrian access. NED Regional Operations advise that for safety reasons access could not be accommodated under any circumstance through the main car park given its comparative capacity restraints and the potential of the adverse impacts on both visiting members of the public and site management staff using this area. The use of vehicles across this land is something that would present an unacceptable risk to both public and staff safety.

8.28 The proposal indicates that there may be a requirement for out of hours use of the premises. NED Regional Operations advises that the Roe Valley Country Park is secured outside of its seasonal opening hours. NED further advise that there seems to be a suggestion that out of hours access would potentially be required and the application would involve the creation of a single bedroom providing accommodation onsite, indicative of an intent to enable overnight stays. This raises additional security concerns in respect of the site and associated facilities onsite.

8.29 NED express further concerns regarding the proposed cottage advising that NED Regional Operations has current experience with other Men’s Shed facilities under license agreement within its land holdings. NED Regional Operations is aware of no other such site

requiring separate facilities or accommodation for a caretaker who presumably is intended to remain onsite beyond the confines of the wider facility and to remain onsite beyond closure. NED Regional Operations has significant levels of concern regarding security of government assets and questions the legitimacy of any perceived need for such a provision. While not detailed, such a provision within such settings could presumably also serve as hire accommodation to those unconnected with the Men's Shed facility, further increasing security and safety concerns regarding site operation.

8.30 This presents a risk to security of Departmental assets during time periods where access is currently not provided. Security measures onsite outside of opening hours may also interfere with emergency service access should this become necessary, further compromising safety of visitors.

8.31 NED Regional Operations considers that the proposal as currently designed would have a significant and ongoing adverse effect on the ability of DAERA (NIEA) to continue to facilitate safe public access through extremely popular and busy areas of Roe Valley Country Park, as affected by the proposal.

8.32 The agent has not indicated the level of parking required for the cottage in addition to the adjacent Men's Shed proposal which indicates there will be 10 vehicles, and a total of 16 attendees to the site. The potential for conflict between pedestrians and users of the Men's Shed is high, particularly as the pathway is narrow and insufficient to accommodate both vehicles and pedestrians. A key aspect of the country park is that it is a normally vehicle-free environment where users are able to explore the riverside environment unincumbered by concerns regarding their safety due to potential vehicle conflict.

8.33 The Country Park is an important tourism asset and the proposed use has the potential to adversely impact on it with regard to public safety resulting in an adverse impact on the route, character, function or recreational value of the Country Park. The proposal is considered to be incompatible with the tourism/recreational use of the Country Park and would have an adverse impact on its character, quality and function by creating conflict and risk to its users and is regarded as contrary to Policy TSM8 of PPS16.

8.34 The issue of land ownership has been raised within the consultation response form DAERA, outlining that they own the lands within the Country Park. Given this assertion the applicant/agent was asked to amend the P1 form to identify all relevant third parties and to serve notice on them. The agent advised that they do not agree with this assertion by DAERA. The applicant has been asked to demonstrate that they own/control the relevant lands within the red line boundary of the application site and establish that the current P1 form is correct however, to date no further information has been submitted by the applicant to verify their ownership/control of the lands.

Design, Integration and Character

8.35 The proposed refurbishment retains the original character of the cottage by retaining much of the existing finishes and apertures. The plans indicate that the existing external stone and brick finishes will be retrained and repointed with the front porch repaired and finished in a smooth render. The roof will be finished in a natural slate finish with the existing chimneys to be repaired and retained. Windows and doors are to be hardwood and timber cladding is proposed to the peaks on the entrance porch and north western gable. The site curtilage contains a number of mature trees which provide screening and enclosure for the development. The mature vegetation is proposed to be retained which would ensure that the development would have no significant visual impact and would satisfactorily integrate with the surroundings.

8.36 Views of the site/development will be largely limited to within the Country Park with no views readily attainable from the surrounding road network. I am satisfied that the scale and design of the proposal is appropriate for thew rural area and will not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape and is in accordance with Paragraph 6.70 of the SPPS and Policies CTY13 and CTY14 of PPS21.

Access and Parking

8.37 The Access to the application site is proposed via the use of an existing access track onto Dogleap Rd, to the south west of the main public car park entrance. The entrance is currently utilised by DAERA staff to service their secure working premises at the site. DFI Roads have been consulted on the application and have no objections. The

proposal satisfies the requirements of the SPPS and Policy AMP2 of PPS3 in that it will not prejudice road safety.

8.38 Policy AMP7 of PPS3 outlines that development proposals are required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements, with the precise amount of car parking to be determined having regard to published standards (Parking Standards) and according to the specific characteristics and location of the development.

8.39 The proposed site plan indicates dedicated car parking provision for the cottage. Given the nature and scale of the accommodation I am content that the proposal would provide adequate parking in line with Policy AMP7.

Natural Heritage

8.40 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment was submitted by the applicant as part of the application. The PEA assessed the ecological value of the site and assed the potential impact on designated sites and protected and priority species and habitats. The assessment found that while the site/surrounding environs suitable for badger and otters no evidence was found within the survey area, while the habitat on site was deemed unsuitable for newts and lizards. A number of bird species were observed within the site, although no evidence of Pine Martin was found. The existing buildings and mature trees within the site were surveys for bat roost potential with Building 1 (adjacent building) was found to have a high roost potential, while Building 2 (subject building) was found to have moderate potential. A number of trees within the site were found to have a range of low, moderate and high roost potential. The report advised that a bat activity survey be carried out to determine if bats were roosting in the building/trees within the site in order to determine the potential impact on local population and provide any necessary mitigation. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam were detected outside the application site along the riverbank. The report advises that biosecurity measures should be implemented to prevent the spread of these species.

8.41 A Bat Survey was also submitted with the application as advised by the PEA. The survey was conducted over three separate dates between 8th July and 30th August comprising a mix of dusk and dawn surveys. The survey noted that bat activity on the site was high with 7 species recorded during the 3 surveys. Building 1 (adjacent building)

hosted a Natterers bat night roost and was also used for foraging by Natterers. The Mature trees were used by a small number of pipistrelles and Leisler's Bats as night roosts and are an important foraging source for many bat species. No roosts have been identified within the subject building.

8.42 The bat survey provides advice in terms of the retention of existing trees used for roosting and foraging and advises against the use of inappropriate lighting within the site. the report provides mitigation options in the form of retention of roosting structures or the construction of purpose built alternative roosting buildings. A Bat Mitigation report was submitted in September 2025 and DAERA Natural Environment Division (NED) were consulted. On the basis of the information provided, NED Development Management Team has no concerns regarding impacts of the proposal on designated sites and other natural heritage interests subject to recommended conditions to comply with Policy NH5 of PPS2.

8.43 The Proposal is adjacent to River Roe and Tributaries ASSI and SAC. River Roe and Tributaries qualifies as an ASSI for the physical features of the river and its associated riverine flora and fauna, including the population of Atlantic Salmon, which is of international importance, Otter and the extent of Upland Oakwood present. Impacts to the designated site selection features may arise through degradation of the adjacent aquatic environment from contaminated runoff resulting during construction and operational works. DAERA NED have considered the impact of the development on the designated sites and advise that there is the potential to impact the designated sites. Advice has been provided in regard to prohibiting discharge to the watercourse and ensuring an appropriate buffer is in place between construction works and the River Roe.

8.44 This planning application is being considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by Shared Environmental Service (SES) on behalf of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council which is the competent authority responsible for authorising the project and any assessment of it required by the Regulations.

8.45 Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises the project would not have an

adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. Conditions have been provided regarding the requirement of a minimum 10m buffer between construction works and storage areas and the designated SAC and that the necessary permission is obtained from NI Water or Consent to Discharge from DAERA prior to development commencing.

8.46 Loughs Agency is the statutory body charged with the conservation, protection and development of inland fisheries within the Foyle and Carlingford systems. Loughs Agency has considered the information provided as well as comments from NIEA and SES and are cntent.

8.47 As above, given the principle of development is unacceptable the Planning Department have not formally requested the submission of the required information as identified by Loughs Agency. However, if the application were to be approved this information should be requested via condition to be addressed/discharged prior to the commencement of any development.

8.48 Subject to the implementation of the mitigation outlined within the consultation response from SES, adherence to best working practices/pollution prevention guidance – It is considered that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the designated site and is therefore acceptable under Paragraphs 6.176 and 6.183 of the SPPS and Policies NH1, NH2 and NH3 of PPS2.

PPS15: Planning and Flood Risk

8.49 The application site is identified as being located partially within the fluvial floodplain of the River Roe as identified on the strategic flood map. Paragraph 6.107 of the SPPS and Policy FLD1 of 15 are applicable in this instance and advise that development will be permitted within the fluvial floodplain unless it meets with one of the permitted exceptions as outlined.

8.50 While the proposal would not squarely fall within one of the permitted exceptions categories the proposal would, by its previous use and stature, be eligible for replacement for residential use, similar in nature to the intended use, albeit in association with a community use. As

such it would be appropriate to consider the proposal as an exception under Policy FLD 1.

8.51 The submitted plans indicate that there is no built development proposed within the floodplain. DFI Rivers have confirmed that an FRA would be required for this site due to the proximity of the site in relation to the River Roe and a mill race which is currently leaking out onto the field located to the west of the site in question. A river model for the mill race and the River Roe would help determine the true extent of the fluvial flood plain in relation to this site. Provision for requesting a Flood Risk Assessment in this instance is set out at Paragraph 6.111 of the SPPS. To date no Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted.

8.52 In the absence of a Flood Risk Assessment the accurate extent of the fluvial floodplain cannot be satisfactorily determined and therefore it cannot be determined if there is development proposed within the fluvial floodplain. In adopting a precautionary approach of flooding as set out in PPS15 as it has not been demonstrated that the proposal does not propose development within a floodplain and is not a permitted exception the proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.107 of the SPPS and Policy FLD1 of 15.

Odour Assessment

8.53 Within the consultation response NI Water advised that the application site is located wholly or partially within the Wastewater Treatment Work's odour consultation zone boundary an Odour Encroachment Assessment is required to determine the compatibility of these proposals with the existing operation of the Wastewater Treatment Works.

8.54 The opening hours of the existing Men's Shed facility are noted to be limited to Tuesday and Thursday 10am – 4pm. No details regarding the proposed opening hours of the proposed facility have been provided. NI Water were asked if based on the continuation of current operating hours would NI Water still require an Odour Encroachment Assessment for the proposed development.

8.55 NI Water advised under application LA01/2023/1276/F that they are willing to waive the requirement for an odour assessment on this occasion as long as the applicant is aware that the site is within an odour boundary and that they can still submit a development

encroachment – odour assessment application to NI Water should they have any concerns relating to odour.

8.56 It is therefore considered that an odour assessment is not required for this proposal. Given the potential for future engagement with NI Water to address any concerns regarding odour I am satisfied that there would not be any unacceptable impact on the amenity of the users of the facility.

Consideration of representations

8.57 Many of the issues raised within the letters of objection have been addressed within the report above. While acknowledging the benefits and value of the Men's Shed organisation the proposed use is one which is considered to be a town centre type use and therefore is not considered to be appropriate to the location. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the applicant has carried out sufficient enquiry for suitable premises within Limavady Town Centre or other sequentially preferable location within the town and that no suitable sites exist. The rural location may impact upon the ability of some members or potential members from being able to easily access the facility given the lack of public transport to the Country Park. This coupled with the ownership/access issues highlighted by DAERA would further exacerbate these issues in that access to the site from the main car park may be difficult for those with disabilities.

8.58 The scale and design of the development is acceptable in that the proposal seeks to retain the existing buildings with the extensions and alteration proposed being subordinate to and in sympathetic to the character of the building. views of the development will only be readily attainable from within close proximity to the site by those using the riverside walks. The scale and design of the proposal will allow it to visually integrate within the site without any significant adverse visual impacts.

8.59 There is the potential for the proposal to have an unacceptable impact on bats, a protected species. In the absence of further information to advice on appropriate mitigation it has not been demonstrated that there would not be an unacceptable impact on protected species. Additional information and mitigation is required to demonstrate that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the adjacent River Roe which is a internationally designated site.

8.60 In terms of the application setting a precedence for further development at the site any future development at this location would be required to be in line with the requirements of the Northern Area Plan which is restrictive in terms of the type of development permitted in this location, unless other exceptional planning reasons were provided to merit deviation from the Plan policies.

8.61 In conclusion I am minded to recommend refusal of the application. The proposal is located within the Roe Valley Country Park LLPA which outlines a presumption against development other than that essential to the operation of agriculture and for the operation of the country park, neither of which relate to the proposed development. The proposal seeks to utilise the existing pedestrian pathway within the Roe Valley Country Park to facilitate vehicular access to the site. This arrangement has the potential to cause conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and is considered to be incompatible with the tourism/recreational use of the Country Park and would have an adverse impact on its character, quality and function.

8.62 Additionally, it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposed development is not located within a floodplain and that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on designated sites, protected species and habitats.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

8.63 The potential impact this proposal on Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites has been assessed in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). Based on the information provided, the proposal would require a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), including Appropriate Assessment, due to its proximity to the River Roe and Tributaries SAC and the potential pathways for impacts on the qualifying interests of the European site.

8.64 However, following Appropriate Assessment undertaken by Shared Environmental Service (SES), and having regard to the proposed mitigation measures and recommended planning conditions, it was concluded that the proposal would not be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity, features, conservation objectives or conservation status of the River Roe and Tributaries SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposal is considered unacceptable in this location having regard to the Northern Area Plan 2016 and other material considerations including the SPPS and the proposal fails to comply with the Northern Area Plan and relevant planning policies contained within the SPPS, PPS2, PPS15, PPS 16 and PPS21.

9.2 The proposal fails to demonstrate that the development is appropriate in principle within the countryside and within this Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA), while also failing to satisfactorily address issues relating to protected sites and species, landscape and tourism impact, and flood risk.

10 Reasons for Refusal

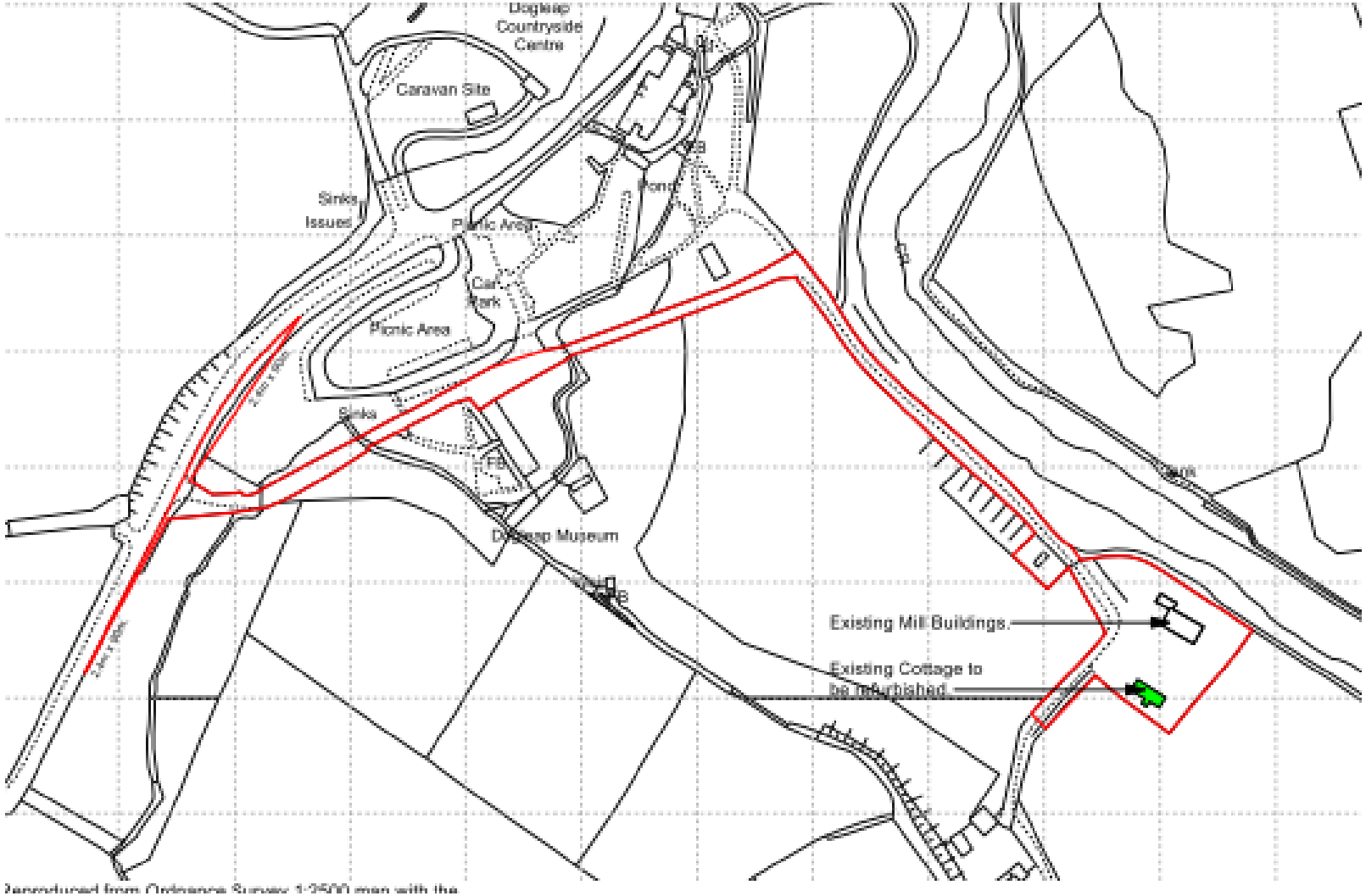
1. The proposal is contrary to the Northern Area Plan 2016, Policy ENV1, Designation LYL02 (Roe Park LLPA) in that the proposal is not considered to be an appropriate form of development in this location, being development which is not essential to the operation of agriculture or for the operation of the Country Park.

2. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.73 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (Edition 2) for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY1 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that there are no overriding reasons why this development is essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.

3. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.107 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (Edition 2) for Northern Ireland and Policy FLD1 of 15 in that it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development is not within the fluvial floodplain and measures to manage and mitigate against the associated flood risks have not been identified.

4. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.107 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (Edition 2) for Northern Ireland and Policy TSM8 of PPS16 in that it would have an adverse impact on a tourism asset which would significantly compromise its tourism value.

Site location Map



Referral Request

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Development Management Information Note 07

January 2024

Annex 1

Template for Requesting Referral of a Contentious Delegated Decision to Issue' List Planning Application to Planning Committee for Determination

The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee provides for an Elected Member to request a planning application listed on the weekly list of 'contentious delegated decisions ready' to be referred to Planning Committee for determination. This request must be received by the Planning Department no later than 10am on the Monday following the issuing of the contentious list and submitted via email to planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

Planning Reference	**LA01/2024.0137.F, and LA01.2023.1276.F**
Elected Member Name	Councillor Steven Callaghan
Contact Details	Tel: 07824365219 Email:Steven.Callaghan@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Refusal Reasons

1. The proposal is contrary to the Northern Area Plan 2016, Policy ENV1, Designation LYL02 (Roe Park LLPA) in that the proposal is not considered to be an appropriate form of development in this location, being development which is not essential to the operation of agriculture or for the operation of the Country Park.

Rebuttal 01

This proposal does not represent 'further development', this is the sensitive restoration and re-use of existing buildings which have heritage importance and which are worth saving. It is much more responsible to save these buildings than abandon them and the planning authority appears to have no plan for preserving the buildings.

2. The proposal is contrary to Paragraphs 6.73 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY1 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that there are no overriding reasons why this development is essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.

Rebuttal 02

This ignores the fact that the buildings are located here already. CCG Planning have already agreed to a similar proposal for CAN (Compass Advocacy Network) at Lislagan Farm in Ballymoney, and similarly and initially attempted to stop the charity from relocating out into the countryside.

LA01/2021/1409/F

3. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.107 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy FLD1 of 15 in that it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development is not within the fluvial floodplain and measures to manage and mitigate against the associated flood risks have not been identified.

Rebuttal 03

All matters in relation to this have been resolved in the planning submissions, there is no evidence that flooding will be of risk, rather it is NIEA that have caused the localised issues of flooding due to their mismanagement and unsuccessful partial removal of the Layde systems, however no flooding has ever threatened the buildings.

Ill 02 Above aerial shows the scars and flood damage on the fields from the old Layde structures.

In a similar situation in Cloughmills – CCG Planning approved the sensitive restoration of the Mill buildings even though there was a defined flood risk in that case and the charity allowed for reasonable measures to defend against any flooding.
LA01/2017/0964/F

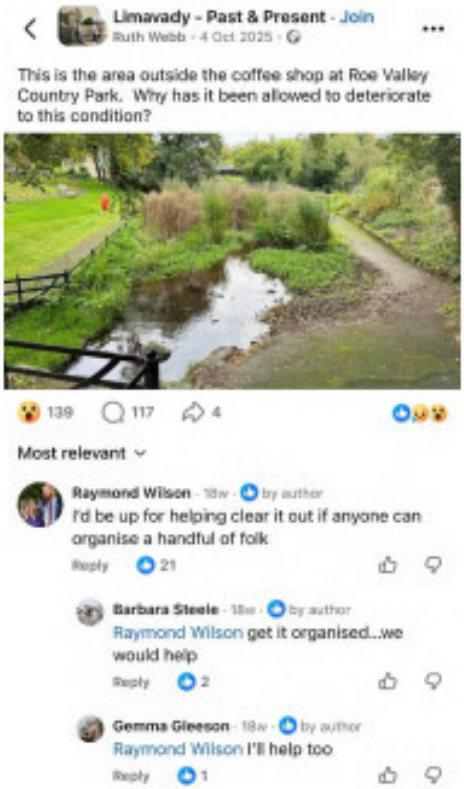
Ill 03 Cloughmills Old Mill building with flooding mitigation built in to the building.

4. The proposal is contrary to Paragraph 6.107 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy TSM8 of PPS16 in that it would have an adverse impact on a tourism asset which would significantly compromise its tourism value.

Rebuttal 04

There is simply no evidence for this suggestion.
In many countryside parks in the UK and NI, there would be the expectation that any community activity within a park will increase its connection and resonance with community and place.

This proposal could assist with assistance with improving the current condition and offering of Roe Valley Country Park.



A sympathetic re-use would actively support tourism, heritage conservation, rural sustainability, and prevent further deterioration of heritage structures. Northern Ireland's planning framework strongly favours the re-use of existing rural buildings where it secures their retention, maintains character, and brings sustainable benefits.

PPS 21 aims to strike a balance between protecting the rural environment and sustaining vibrant rural communities through appropriate development.

1. **Strong Policy Support for Re-Use and Conversion of Existing Rural Buildings.**

PPS 21 explicitly encourages the sympathetic conversion and re-use of suitable existing non-residential buildings (such as old mills, barns, or agricultural structures) to secure their long-term upkeep and retention.

Policy CTY 4 (Conversion and Reuse of Existing Buildings) states that planning permission will be granted where proposals:
- Retain and maintain the form, character, architectural features, and setting of the building.
- Do not adversely affect the character or appearance of the locality.

The buildings are of permanent stone construction and, while not listed, contribute to local rural character and heritage. Their deteriorating state risks total loss, which would be a greater detriment to the landscape and tourism appeal than a community-led re-use. Re-using them prevents dereliction, aligns with sustainable development principles, and avoids the visual impact of further decay or demolition in a scenic country park.

PPS 21 and related guidance (e.g., A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside) highlight the potential to bring new life to former mills and other rural buildings through sympathetic adaptation for economic, recreational, tourism, or community uses.

2. **Community Use as Complimentary to the Country Park and Tourism**

A community use (e.g., heritage interpretation, meeting space, local events venue, café, or educational facility) would enhance rather than harm tourism. The Causeway Coast and Glens region builds on its natural beauty, heritage, and sustainable tourism, as reflected in the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust strategies and the area's AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Action Plans.

- This complements the country park by adding cultural depth and year-round activity, rather than seasonal or high-impact tourism. Derelict buildings detract from visitor experience; restored ones become assets.

3. **Heritage Value and Prevention of Loss**

These stone mill buildings are vernacular heritage elements that contribute to local distinctiveness and landscape character. NI guidance on traditional/vernacular buildings (from Department for Communities and heritage bodies) stresses their importance in rural settings and encourages supportive policies for re-use. Loss through deterioration would erode the area's unique identity, which underpins tourism (e.g., the Causeway Coast's blend of natural and built heritage).

Refusal risks irreversible harm, whereas approval aligns with broader objectives to protect and enhance rural assets.

4. **Exemplars of Successful Re-Use**

Importantly, if the green lane museum had not been used or repurposed, would it have been saved?

The country park itself is a tourism asset in the Causeway Coast and Glens area, valued for its natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and rural heritage. TSM 8 requires protection of such assets, including their scenic quality, environmental integrity, and visitor appeal.

Allowing the old stone mill buildings to deteriorate further would itself constitute an adverse impact under TSM 8, as derelict structures could blight the landscape, deter visitors, and erode

Erratum

LA01/2024/0137/F

1.0 Update

1.1 Replace paragraphs 8.32, 8.38 and 8.39 with the following revised paragraphs below:

8.32 No in-curtilage parking will be provided for the caretakers dwelling or associated Men's Shed facility. It is proposed that parking for the ancillary accommodation and Men's Shed will be provided using the country park's existing parking facilities. As per Parking Standards, the caretaker's dwelling requires 1.5 in-curtilage parking spaces. The associated Men's Shed facility is anticipated to generate 10 vehicles per day. Given the nearest existing car park is 385m from the site via narrow lanes, the potential for conflict between pedestrians and users of the Men's Shed and ancillary accommodation is high. The access route is insufficient to safely accommodate both vehicles and pedestrians. A key aspect of the country park is that it is a normally vehicle-free environment where users are able to explore the riverside environment unincumbered by concerns regarding their safety due to potential vehicle conflict.

8.38 Policy AMP7 of PPS3 outlines that development proposals are required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. It goes onto state that a reduced level of carparking may be acceptable in certain circumstances:

- Where through a Transport Assessment it forms part of a package of measures to provide alternative transport modes.
- The site is in a highly accessible location well served by public transport.
- The development would benefit from spare capacity in nearby public carparks or adjacent on street parking.
- Where shared parking is a viable option.
- Where an exercise in flexibility would assist in conservation of the built or natural heritage, would aid rural regeneration, facilitate a better quality of development or the beneficial reuse of an existing building.

8.39 In this case no parking within the curtilage of the facility or ancillary caretaker's dwelling is proposed. The site layout states that parking is to be provided using the Country Park's existing parking facilities. It goes onto state that this is to minimise parking demand and that alternative arrangements to site/ car park include cycling. Given that the nearest Country Park parking spaces are approximately 385m via paths/ narrow laneway to the site, and that access to the car park in question is limited and controlled entirely by NIEA, the proposed parking arrangement is inadequate. The proposal is contrary to Policy AMP 7 as no viable parking solution is proposed or demonstrated via Transport Assessment.

Erratum 2

LA01/2024/0137/F

1.0 Update

1.1 In the Planning Committee Report refusal reason 1 is ‘The proposal is contrary to the Northern Area Plan 2016, Policy ENV1, Designation LYL02 (Roe Park LLPA) in that the proposal is not considered to be an appropriate form of development in this location, being development which is not essential to the operation of agriculture or for the operation of the Country Park.’

1.2 This should be amended to state, ‘The proposal is contrary to the Northern Area Plan 2016, Policy ENV1, Designation LYL01 (Roe Valley Country Park LLPA) in that the proposal is not considered to be an appropriate form of development in this location, being development which is not essential to the operation of agriculture or for the operation of the Country Park.’

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee note the contents of this Erratum and agree with the recommendation to refuse the application.

Addendum

LA01/2024/0137/F

1.0 Update

1.1 Photos and videos were submitted on 25th August 2026 which the Agent says shows unmanaged waters escaping from laydes onto the applicant's site.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 A photograph is annotated to state that that the water shown was not flood waters. One photo shows an overgrown area with the annotation *unmanaged duck pond and unmaintained environment*. Another photo shows a stream, with surrounding vegetation and the annotation *unmanaged and unmaintained environment*. A video shows a view from within the site with some broken trees in the background. Another video shows water flowing into a field. Another video shows a person walking in a flooded field.

2.2 It is unclear what the submission is attempting to demonstrate however it provides evidence of surface water flooding in and around the site.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 That the Committee note the contents of this Addendum and agree with the recommendation to Refuse the application